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UNCLAS COLOMBO 001954

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

FOR SA/INS AND INR/NESA

E.O. 12958: DECL: N/A

TAGS: PREL PGOV PINR PHUM MV UN

SUBJECT: Maldives: President Goyoom announces cabinet changes and new diplomatic appointments

¶1. (U) This message is Sensitive but Unclassified --  
Please handle accordingly.

¶2. (U) In an October 9 announcement, Maldivian President Maumoon Gayoom announced changes to his cabinet, and appointed new ambassadors to Sri Lanka and the UN. Please see Para four for a complete listing of the new appointments.

¶3. (SBU) Mission has carefully reviewed Gayoom's announcement and has the following comments re the selections:

-- Of particular note was the appointment of Raashida Yoosuf as the High Commissioner to Sri Lanka. Yoosuf was the Minister of Women's Affairs and Social Welfare at the time of her appointment. She is reportedly the first woman ever chosen to be a Maldivian ambassador. (Note: The Sri Lanka high commissioner slot is an important one for the Maldives, which transacts much commercial and other business out of Colombo. The selection of Yoosuf follows in the wake of Gayoom's naming of the first woman as Atoll Chief last year. Atoll Chief is an influential position in the Maldives.)

-- Yoosuf's predecessor as high commissioner in Sri Lanka, Abdul Azeez, has been named Deputy Minister of Housing. Azeez, the former dean of Colombo's diplomatic corps, had served in Sri Lanka for years.

-- Also of note was the appointment of Mohamed Latheef as the Ambassador to the UN. Latheef is leaving his position as Minister of Education, which he held for nine years, to take his position at the UN. Both Yoosuf's and Latheef's positions are cabinet-level. We understand that the GoRM is preparing a formal request to have Mr. Latheef co-accredited to the U.S.

¶4. (U) Following are the appointments to the Maldivian cabinet and diplomatic corps that were announced on October 9:

-- Aneesa Ahmed was appointed Minister of Women's Affairs and Social Security. She was formally the Deputy Minister in this ministry;

-- Abdul Azeez was appointed Deputy Minister of Home Affairs, Housing and Environment. He was formally the Ambassador to Sri Lanka;

-- Midhat Hilmy was appointed Minister of Communication, Science and Technology. He was formally the Deputy Minister in this ministry;

-- Mohamed Latheef was appointed Ambassador to the UN. He was the Minister of Education;

-- Ismail Shafeeu was appointed Minister of Education. He was formally the Minister of Home Affairs, Housing and Environment;

-- Mahmood Shaugy was appointed Deputy Minister of Education. He was formally the Assistant Director General in this ministry;

-- Raashida Yoosuf was appointed Ambassador to Sri Lanka. She was the Minister of Women's Affairs and Social Welfare.

Wills